



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## LETTERS OF RICHARD ADAMS (1) TO THOMAS ADAMS.

From the Originals in the Collection of the Virginia Historical Society.

## I

[Addressed] To Mr. Thomas Adams of Virg'a to the Care  
Jno M. Jordan & Co. Merchants London.

Cumberland Town (2) 8 Augt 1771

Dr Bro'r

I have wrote you several letters lately to wich I refer, & shall

---

(1)Ebenezer Adams,son of Richard Adams, of Abridge, Essex, England, citizen and merchant tailor of London, came to Virginia before 1714, and settled in New Kent County, where he died, June 13, 1735. His home was probably the "Winslows" mentioned in one of the letters. He married Tabitha, daughter of Richard Cocke of "Bremo," Henrico County, and had (in addition to his sons) daughters, Tabitha who married Richard Eppes, Anne married Col. Francis Smith of Essex Co. (and was mother of William Smith, who married Mary Belfield, and is mentioned in one of the letters) and Sarah who married Col. John Fry of Albemarle County. Col Richard Adams the writer of the letters, was born May 17, 1726 and died in Richmond, Aug. 2, 1800. He was the largest land owner of his day in Richmond and resided in a house on Church Hill (or Richmond Hill as it was then called) which is now a part of the Monte Maria Convent. He was a member of the House of Burgesses for New Kent, 1752-65, and for Henrico 1769-1775, of the Revolutionary Convention of 1775 and 1776, the House of Delegates 1776-78, and State Senate 1779-82. He married April 10, 1755, Elizabeth, daughter of Leroy Griffin, of Richmond County and sister of Judge Cyrus Griffin mentioned in one of the letters.

Thomas Adams, the brother, was born about 1730 and died at his residence in Augusta County, 1785. He went to England about 1762 and engaged in business as a merchant in London, and returned to Virginia before May 1774. He was a member of the Continental Congress 1778-79, and of the Virginia Senate 1784-87. He married, Elizabeth Fauntleroy, widow of his first cousin, Bowler Cocke, Jr., and died without issue. For a genealogy of the Adams family, see Wm. & Mary Quarterly V, 159-164.

Bowler Cocke, of "Bremo," the uncle several times mentioned, married first, Sarah—and secondly, Elizabeth, widow of John Carter, and daughter and heirress of Edward Hill, of "Shirley," Charles City County. After his second marriage (by which there were no children) he removed to "Shirley." Bowler Cocke, a son of the first marriage, lived at "Bremo" where he died in 1772, leaving five children all under age. The "Mrs. Cocke" referred to as nursing Bowler Cocke, Sr., was his daughter-in-law.

(2)On the Pamunkey River in New Kent County, once a trading point of some importance.

write agin & Woodford tomorrow who I expect to see at Richm'd in order to take his leave, his ship being fully loaded & leaves out some Tobo. This just serves to let you know we are all well & hope it will find you safe arrived, & in good health & wich I pray God to Continue, I had a most unfavorable acc't of our Porr old uncle of Bremo yesterday. I fear he will not survive many Days, Mr. Webb informs me he (has &) will pay of all our Dr Friend Bowler's Detts, (& that he will have left by the best Estimate £2,000) a great rielief to that worthy Family. The wet season we have had all the Summer has made the Inhabitants very sickly. Died within a few Days Mr Francis Jerdone & Mr Richm'd Terrell my old Friends, wich will be some loss to me. I Remain Dr B'r

Yrs Mo. Affcly

Rich'd Adams.

## II

[Addressed] Mr. Thomas Adams of Viga, Mecht, London & Capt Woodford.

Richmond Hill, Augst 16, 1771

Dear Bro'r

Mr Charles Carter (3) sends Home & Capt Woodford a neat Silver Cup to be sold for old silver in order to Purchase new &

(3) Charles Carter (1732-1806), son of John and Elizabeth (Hill) Carter of "Corotman" and "Shirley." After the death of his step-father Bowler Cocke, he removed to "Shirley" where his descendants have since lived. He was for many years a member of the House of Burgesses and was chosen member of the Council when the State Government was organized; but did not accept. For a note in regard to him, see this Magazine, XVII, 257. He married first, Mary Walker, daughter of Charles Carter, of "Cleve," King George Co., and secondly, Ann Butler, daughter of Bernard Moore, of "Chelsea," King William County. Issue (1st marriage), 1. John Hill, born 1757; 2. Charles, born 1759; 3. George, born 1761, married Lelia Skipwith; 4. Mary, born 1763, married George Braxton; 5. Elizabeth, born 1764, married Robert Randolph; 6. Charles, born 1766, married Ann Carter; 7. Edward, born 1767, married Jane Carter; 8. Landon, born 1767; (2d marriage); 9. Robert Hill, born 1771; 10. Anne Hill, born 1773, married General Henry Lee; 11. Robert, born 1774, married Mary Nelson; 12. Bernard, born 1776; 13. John, born 1777; 14. Kate Spotswood, born 1779, married Carter Berkeley; 15. Bernard, born 1780, married Lucy Lee; 16. Williams, born 1782, married Charlotte Foushee; 17. Butler, born 1784; 18. Mildred, born 1786; 19. Lucy, born 1789, married Nathaniel Burwell; 20. William Fitzhugh, born 1791; 21. Calphemea, born 1796; many of these died young.

The will of Charles Carter, of Shirley, does not appear to be of record in Charles City County ((where many of the records were destroyed

as I think it not much the worse for ware, have wrote to the House to purchase it for me, expecting it will not sell for more during the Civil War), but a copy of it is included in the record of the case of Carter vs. Carter in the (now extinct) Chancery Court of the Fredericksburg District, 1816, a suit begun in the High Court of Chancery 1785. The following is an abstract of the will:

To be buried near my honored partaker of eternal life, without any funeral pomp and nothing but the funeral service to be read over my grave by the parson of the parish (should we be so fortunate as to have one among us). I earnestly request my friends and family not to go into mourning, as I always thought it a custom absurd and extravagant;

Whereas I have given my son Charles all my estate, real and personal, lying in the County of Richmond or Richmond and Westmoreland, and if there is any informality in the deed I confirm said lands, &c., to him. My land in Lancaster, known as Nanty Rorson [Poison;], containing 800 acres, more or less, shall remain for the use of Mrs. Elizabeth Currie (the widow of my friend Mr. David Currie) for the better support of herself and family during her life, and after her death to go to my son Charles

To grandson, Charles Carter, son of George, tract of land in Lancaster, 1200 acres, called the Great Mill, and if he dies before 21 years, to my son Charles.

I have given my son Edward, 4000 acres of my Broad Run tract, Prince William County, with the slaves, stocks, &c., and if there is any informality in the deed to him I confirm the gift. To son Edward the remainder of the Broad Run tract, about 2000 acres in Prince William, called Saints Hill with the slaves, stocks, etc., on it.

I have given to my son Robert my estate in King William Co. called Panpetike, with the slaves, stocks, &c., there, and I also give him a small tract called Westleys and a college lot of 96 acres purchased of Valentine, and I now confirm the deeds. To son Robert all my lands, slaves, stocks, &c., in Hanover County, and to him, after the death or marriage of my dear wife, all my lands in the County of Charles City and Henrico Counties, with the slaves, stocks, &c., on Shirley and Hardens tracts and the houses and stocks on the Chickahominy tract. After wife's death or marriage, slaves on Chickahominy tract to son Charles. To son Robert, after the death or marriage of my wife, all the household and kitchen furniture and books.

To son Bernard all that tract in Fauquier County containing 5130 acres, except 1200 acres called the Lodge, and also give him £300. To son Bernard, all the slaves, stocks, &c., on the land devised him.

To son Williams and William Fitzhugh all my estate, real and personal, in Caroline County, to be equally divided, and also that part of my Fauquier land, the lower part of my tract, known as Lodge Quarter, to be equally divided, with all the slaves, &c., on it.

As my wife Ann Butler is entitled by marriage contract, as will appear more fully in the records of King William Co., to the sum of £3000, current money of gold or silver, to be paid her at my death, and for its payment I subject my whole estate. The contract would certainly bar her from any further claim on my estate, "and as I think the sum too small a pittance for so valuable a woman she having been every moment of her life a most agreeable, dutiful and affectionate wife," it is my desire to give her a competent portion so as to live genteely though not extravagantly, so I give her for life or until marriage all my lands in Charles City and Henrico, including Shirley, Chickahominy, Hardens and the Mill together with the use of the furniture &c. at Shirley. I give her also during life, my plantation in Prince George called Old Town, with the

than the value of New Plate, suppose  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz., in that case should be glad to have it, otherwise I would not have it Pur-slaves, stocks, &c. Also give her the absolute property of the chariot, chariot horses and harness. If she marry again she may have the use of the two postillions George and Scott and any three women servants. To my two daughters Mildred Walker and Lucy, 15 slaves each and also £1500 each.

Whereas, by a decree of the High Court of Chancery, I am entitled to one fourth part of a large tract of land known as Frying Pan and Copper Mine in Loudoun and Fairfax Counties, my share to be equally among my daughters, Mary Braxton, Elizabeth Randolph, Ann Hill Lee, Catherine Spotswood Berkeley, Mildred Walker and Lucy.

Whereas the tract of land in King William County called West Point was mortgaged by Carter Braxton, deceased, to William Fitzhugh, of Chatham, and myself to secure us for money paid for said Braxton, which mortgage was foreclosed by a Chancery decree March 1799, and said tract was ordered to be sold, which I bought in at £7000. I desired said land to be sold and the bequest to daughters Mildred and Lucy (£3000 paid out of the proceeds).

Whereas I have a deed of trust on Malvern Hills to secure the payment of monies advanced by me to Mr. Robert Nelson, and it being my intention to secure the use of said Malvern Hills to said Robert Nelson and Susannah his wife for the life of the longest liver of them, neither the trustees in the deed or my executors are to force a sale but to suffer said Robert Nelson and Susannah his wife to reside there during life, and after their deaths the land to be sold and the money due me be divided between my wife and daughters or their heirs. All other mortgages due me to be foreclosed as soon as possible and the money divided between my wife and daughters. On the marriage or death of my wife Old Town in Prince George to be sold and the proceeds divided between my daughters.

Whereas I am apprehensive that unless the property herein before bequeathed to my daughter Ann Hill Lee both real and personal be secured to her solely for the benefit and that of her children they may be destined to come to want, I therefore revoke the bequest to her and bequeath said property to William Fitzhugh of Chatham, John Walker of Belvoir, Robert Randolph of Eastern View, my son Robert Carter and my son-in-law Dr. Carter Berkeley in trust for her without possession or molestation from her husband General Henry Lee, Appoints the same friends her executors. Dated May 10, 1803.

Codicil Sept. 6, 1805, makes some minor changes and adds sons Charles, Bernard and Williams to his executors.

Codicil Sept. 9, 1805. The Prince George estate to be sold immediately after his death and the proceeds paid to my wife.

Codicil Nov. 20, 1805. By certificate to my deceased son Robert's will I have confirmed the disposition made by Robert of the property given him, and I ratify and confirm the bequests to Robert Carters children.

Codicil Nov. 20, 1805. Robert Nelson is largely indebted to me and I had intended to bequeath £600 of said debt to said Nelson; but think it better to give it to Nelson's two daughters.

Codicil May 3, 1806. As my son Edward has lately been killed by the caving in of part of said Edward's mill-race, I bequeath the part of Broad Run, called Saints Hill (with 42 slaves, 6 horses, 35 head of cattle, 43 hogs, now thereon &c.) now bequeath it to my son-in-law Robert Randolph in trust for all the sons of said Edward Carter.

Proved Sept. 18, 1806.

chased for me as my greatest Inducement is because I expect it will sold a good bargain. Our Dr Old Uncle of Bremono made his exit the 14th this month, & his old acquaintance & neighbour old Mr Jno Pleasants the 13th in the Evening. The Colony in general very Sickly. Yrs Affly

Rich'd Adams.

### III.

Winslows, 30th Sept 1771

Dr Bro'r

I had your favor & Capt. Hatch, (Capt. McCaw [?] not yet arrived) I have wrote you several letters giving you the best acct I could of the Destruction of our Country occasioned by the Fresh (4) in the month of May last, so dreadful that a true acct of it was hardly to be credited by any Person that was well acquainted with the River, that was not a Spectator. I should been glad to have had you present (on my Porch for two Days) to have seen the Destruction, it came down so fast that it raised 16 Inches an hour 'Til it got to its height which was about 40 feet Perpendicular, many Parts of the low grounds entirely washed away, & other parts rendered useless by being cover'd with sand in many Places 10 or 12 feet thick, though in General its not so much injured as was at first apprehended, This Deluge or something else in the air has caused a great mortality in the Country, it being the most sickly summer ever known, great numbers have died though not many of any

---

(4) The freshet of May 1771 in the James, Rappahannock and Roanoke rivers appears to have been the greatest in our history. The newspapers and letters of this time contain frequent references to it. A letter by Col. Richard Bland, dated August 1, 1771, and published in this Magazine V, 128, gives an interesting account. The *Virginia Gazette* of May 30, 1771, contains the following:

"A Letter from Richmond, dated on Monday last, says; 'There is now the greatest Fresh in James River ever known, it being at least twenty Feet higher than that in May 1766. The Warehouses at Westham are entirely gone, with three Hundred Hogsheds of Tobacco. At Byrd's Warehouse, the Water is now Half Way up the lower Tier of Hogsheds, the other Warehouses at Shocco are almost under Water, and the Tobacco drifting away by thirty or forty Hogsheds at a Time. It is imagined there might have been about three Thousand Hogsheds in

note except those I have already mentioned to you. Your fears in regard to poor Bowler's affairs, are I hope before this time removed. If you have received my letters every Caution in our Power was used & every thing was settled greatly to the advantage of his Family by the old Gent'n, whose Death

the different Warehouses at Shocko. Almost every Lumber House is gone, and destroyed, on each side of the River, many of them full of Goods, with many Dwellinghouses, both here and at Rocky Ridge."

Some People who left Richmond the same Day in the Afternoon, say that the River was then rising at the Rate of two Inches an Hour; but we since learn, that it began to abate about Sunset.

All the low Grounds have been overflowed, by which Inconceivable Damage has been done. Every Thing was carried off at Farrar's Island, belonging to Colonel Thomas Mann Randolph; and at Elk Island, John Wayles, Esquire, is said to have suffered to the Amount of four Thousand Pounds, Nothing being saved but the People and five Horses.

The Ships in the River were in the most imminent danger from the vast Number of large Trees driving down by the Rapidity of the Current, and many of them have sustained great Damage. The Ships at Shirley Hundred were driven from their Moorings over to City Point, and those at City Point down as low as Jordan's. Captain Stevenson went ashore at the Point, and has not yet got off, Captain Cookie lost three of his Anchors, and was in very great Danger. Six of Captain Clark's Men in the Yawl clearing away the drifting Trees, &c. were over-set, and five of them drowned. Captain Sampson, of Bristol, lost one of his Men, and his Ship was driven so far on Shore that it is feared she will not be got off again.

Some Waggoners who are arrived at Richmond, from Augusta, say that it rained almost every day since they left home, which was about ten or twelve Days, and we since learn that there has been the greatest Devastation in that County and Albemarle by the overflowing of low Grounds, Loss of Stock, Horses, &c."

The same paper, of June 6, contains the following additional account:

"From Richmond we learn that they receive daily Accounts of the Devastation occasioned by the late Floods. From the Mountains to the Falls, the Low Grounds have been swept of almost every Thing valuable, and the Soil is so much injured that it is thought not to be Half its former Value, and a Great Part is entirely ruined. One Instance may suffice: A Tract of Land where the River forks, which before the Fresh was judged to be richly worth ten Thousand Pounds, is now rated at so many Hundreds. Fourteen Negroes belonging to the Estate were drowned, and only one House left out of forty, which were sixty by forty Feet. Off Elk Island, between six and seven Hundred, Head of Cattle, Hogs, Horses and Sheep have been lost, and near a Hundred Houses, besides Grain, Tobacco &c. At Farrars Island, which the highest Fresh never before affected, over eighty Acres of fine Land were rendered forever incapable of Cultivation, the Soil being gone, and in its Stead ten or twelve Feet deep of Sand, upon which a layer of Stones, as if paved, Many other Islands have been tore to Pieces, Hills of Sand thrown up, Channels stopt and their Courses altered, and, in short, the Face of Nature almost changed. Old Joe, an honest and well known negro Fellow at the Falls of James River, who is intimately acquainted with the Remains of an Indian Nation that has resided there for Ages, says he was shown by their old Men the Marks of the greatest Fresh handed

Wise Providence seemed to have happily determined, as he had lived as long as he could have any Enjoyment himself, or could contribute anything to those he left behind, and was most Lucky for poor Mrs Cocke who made herself the greatest Slave to him after he came to Brems, so great that had he not died as he did she would have injured her own health much.

down to them by Tradition, and that upon his carefully measuring, it wanted near fifteen Feet of the late dreadful One. A ship at Warwick Sounded from the Beginning of the perceivable Increase of the River, and found that the Fresh at the Highest, was upwards of forty Feet higher than the Common Tides.—The lessened Value of Lands, Loss of Stocks, Houses, Tobacco, Wheat, and Corn in Houses, with Fencing, and the Crops on the Ground, baffle all Description. Byrd's, Shocko, Richmond, Rocky Ridge, and Warwick, have suffered amazingly, in the Loss of Merchandise and Tobacco, as also Houses, &c. Between five and six Thousand Hogsheads of Tobacco are gone from these Places. The Distress of the People in Albemarle, and those Parts of the Country in the Reach of the Fresh, is not to be described, most of them being without Bread to eat, or Dwellings, and their Stocks gone. The trading Part of the Country has likewise suffered excessively, in European and other Goods as well Imports as Exports. The Losses and very great Distresses of the numerous Sufferers, call loudly for the Interposition and Assistance of the Legislature, which no Doubt that respectable Body will take in as early Consideration as may be, and grant the immediate and effectual Relief which is most wanted.

In some Places Trees, Carcasses, &c., are matted together from twelve to twenty Feet in Height, and, from the horrid Stench, there is no coming near enough to separate them. Happily, if, at this Season, we escape some contagious Disorder. Miles in Length of Trees as Logs came driving down the River, and Nothing could withstand their Force. The Logs, almost up to the Bolt sprits of many Vessels, so that their Anchors could not avail them, and were chiefly lost. There were no Rains to speak of at Richmond or thereabouts, so that they must have fallen from the Mountains to about thirty or forty Miles above the Falls. From the first perceivable Rise of the River at that Place was about Sixty Hours and the Water sometimes rose at the Rapid Rate of sixteen Inches an Hour. Daily Accounts are received of the loss of whole Families, and Houses came floating down with People on them calling for Help, though none could be afforded. Accounts are already received of fifty odd People being drowned.

Appomattox has been little or Nothing affected, which proves that the Rains must have fallen high up the Country.

The Devastation on Roanoke is, if possible, still greater, in the Ruin of Valuable Lands, Loss of Negroes, Stocks, Houses, etc.

On Pamunkey River, the low Grounds are chiefly laid under Water, the Crops and Meadows destroyed, and the Fencing gone. Many Houses and Mills are carried away, and a Deal of Grain and other Commodities spoiled.

A Letter from Fredericksburg says that several Houses and Mills have been swept away from that Place and Falmouth, that the highest Fresh in Rappahannock never came up to the Floors of the Warehouses, but that this rose as high as the Joists, whereby a large Quantity of Tobacco was floated out, nine Hundred Hogsheads from Falmouth, &c. the lower Warehouses, and three Hundred from Dixons, the upper Inspec-



We have had the misfortune to loose our dear little Darling Eben, last month, which was a great shock to the whole family, particularly to his poor Mama, whose great Tenderness for him in a long Illness had occasioned her to exert herself further than she was able to bear in tending on him, which threw her into a violent Fever, & her indulging her Grief had reduced her (almost) to the point of Death, & is stil lower than I ever knew her. To divert her thoughts by a little change & getting into better air we all came down here a few weeks ago, & intend to continue here 'til the cool weather, and I thank God we have found great relief from the change which has Indeared me more to the old place than ever as I think it has many advantages that others want, particularly that most valuable Blessing health. I hope you will never think of parting with it. If you do, pray give me the refusal, as I am determined it shall not go out of our Family. I have not seen Mr. Griffin lately, but expect he will not choose to rent it any longer. If not I shall do the best I can to make you a Crop and will spend part of next Summer here. The meadow must not be any longer neglected, I shall employ a Ditcher to have it put in order as your Stock is increasing, the Crop Tobo. this year will be ab't 6 hhds. I hope to make myself about 40 hhds a good Crop for this year. I am just returned from visiting my Plantations, and am now very certain the whole Crop will not exceed 40,000 hhds & the old Tobo almost intirely Shipt of on all the rivers. Our Inspection begins tomorrow when the price will [word illegible] at 25 S. &c. Hatch had a fine Passage of only 5 weeks out & is now delivering his Cargo at Rocketts Landing in good order, & has consented to return again to London immediately, he begins to take in Tobo tomorrow or next Day, & I expect we shall get him loaded in about a fortnight by him shall write you more fully & remitt you all I can. Pray send me

tion. Much Salt, and other Goods lost, several Vessels driven from their Anchors, a Deal of valuable Land washed away, incredible Quantities of Trees and Fencing came down the River, only one person lost, that had been there came to the knowledge of.

We have no Accounts from Potomack, but from its Connection with the Rivers at the mountains there is no probability of them having escaped this almost general Calamity."

The first act of the General Assembly a the session of July 1771, was one for the relief of the sufferers, (Hening 8, 493-503.)

an acct. of the Hemp Fearow Carry'd Home his last Voyage as I want to settle with all the shippers dont omitt to send me the acc't you mention'd of all your debts here, when you may depend I will see them Collected, as I intend for the future to attend more closely to my own Private affairs, being tired of that of the Publick, wch I shall in some measure decline. Pray remind Mr Brown to send me out the light Post Chaise I wrote to him for, by Woodford as my wife from her Present state of health is very desirous of having one as soon as Possible in order to take the Exercise thats necessary for her. I fear I shall not be able to get the Cranberrys as soon as Hatch sails but will sent them as soon as Possible with anything else that this Country affords, that will be acceptable to either you or Mr Brown. Pray Present our love to Mr Cyrus Griffin let him know I shall answer his letter & Hatch & that I heartily congratulate him on his having an Heir, & that the Doctor & Will his too Bro's are both soon to have that satisfaction as we hear their Wives are in a fair way to Increase the Family. I was in Company a few Weeks ago with our Friend C. Carter he was very desirous of knowing whether you intended to continue in England, his reason he told me was, that he wanted to send to your care one of his Sons, he has certainly the greatest Friendship for us, & will remove to Shirley as soon as he can gett the House repaired wch he expects will be done in about 12 or 13 mo's. I have just heard our sisters & Familys are all well. I remain

Dr Bro. yr. mo. afftly

Rich'd Adams

#### IV.

Virg'a Wmsburg 24th Mar. 1772

Dr Bro'r

I rec'd yours of the 16th Novr and am much obliged to you for the friendly Caution & good advice you gave me concerning my affairs. I had before receiving your letter come to the resolution of doing what you recommend, but am more confirmed in my opinion of the necessity from your very Sensable remarks,

wch are to me very striking, and am convinced that a friend who is a Spectator & is watchful of the Interest of his friend, can sometimes view & see his affairs in a more clear light than he can himself, therefore pray my Dr Bror continue to favor me with your Opinion & good Council on all occasions which is and has been to me of the greatest comfort and advantage, my affairs is at this time, as you very properly conceive particularly circumstanced, having large sums of money due, from many persons who cannot make immediate payment without ruin to themselves, with those we must use the greatest delicacy, so as to secure our debts, and to continue to get paim't though at a long Day, others must be pressed with the greatest Expedition, and hope in a few Weeks to know an Exact state of my situation at Cumberland, as the books will be got up, and am determined to loose no time in having all accts settled and shall remitt mostly for the future, in Bills of Exchange, as I fear Tobo. from some advises I have seen will not answer, Indeed it was always the case with me, when the Writ for the election of Burgesses came to hand in our County the old sherifs office had expired and not having a Court in Nov'r to swear in a new sheriff we had no proper officer to carry on & hold the election in Time, the old sheriff therefore determined not to have any Election, 'til by the mutual consent of all the Candidates, who Promised to take no advantage of any Error in the Proceedings he did hold an Election, when Col Rd Randolph (5) was Elected with me by a majority of two Votes more than Mr. Duval. Upon Examining the poll, DuVal apprehended he had more good Votes than Col Randolph did pet'n the assembly to have the Poll Canvased whereupon Col Randolph not caring to enter into that dispute, broke through his engagem't & procured a pet'n to sett aside the whole Election for want of form, wch was done by the assembly and the Freeholders not approving of Col. Randolph's conduct has sent Du Val with me during my

---

(5) Richard Randolph, (2d) of "Curles," who married Anne, daughter of David Meade. He was a member of the House of Burgesses at the session of Nov. 1766, March 1767, March 1768, May 1769, Nov. 1769, May 1770, and July 1771, and of the Conventions of July and Dec. 1775. Samuel Du Val was a Burgess at the Session of Feb. 1772, March 1773, May 1774, June 1775, and of the Convention of March 1776.

absence Mr. Henry (6) moved for leave to bring in a Bill for appointing an agent wch was granted, and he was soon after called home by the Indisposition of his family & before he returned the friends of Mr. Montague took that mean advantage of having the fate of that Bill determined. When Mr. Henry moved for the Bill I am informed he told the House he was for appointing a Virginian a gentm'n worthy of the trust (meaning you) who was proposed to be a Candidate for that office with Mr. Montague & Doct'r Lee, and had this matter been fairly conducted I think there was a moral certainty you would have been appointed, when the Question came in I am told, the Treasurer, Col. Bland, &c, who was against having any agent, Col. Harrison one of Montague's friends finding there were three Candidates, got up & said as you had been mentioned as One, and the Person who was expected to make the motion in your favor, was not Present, he thought proper to move that the Blank might be filled up with your name, though he should not vote for you, in order it was supposed, that the two other Interests might be united ag'st you, this Finess moved some of your Worthy Friends the Treasurer, Col Thos Nelson, Chas Carter &c who all spoke of you in most respectful Terms, and insisted that as you was moved for in so vage a manner by a gentm'n (If he may be called so) who declared at the time he should not vote for you, that no Question should be put on you in that manner, as they thought you were entitled to more Genteel Treatment and on that acct it was declined, though I have been told by many members that had the Question been put, that they thought it would at that time been carried in your favor, as some unknown to you would have joined your friends resenting the treatment both to you & Mr. Henry, who they thought ought to have been present, as he moved for the bill to be brought in. The next Question was in favor of Mr. Montague wch was carried ag'st him by a large majority, and but very few voted for Doct Lee. This confirmed me you had a majority, however as there was no person present to support

---

(6) On March 12, 1772, Patrick Henry was given leave of absence for the rest of the Session, The transactions described by Col. Adams must have occurred in Committee of the Whole as there is no reference to this in the Journal of the House.

the bill in yr favor it was voted out, without the blank being filled up. Whenever this Question comes up again wch I suppose will be at the next Session, and the Country is determined to have an agent I think there is the greatest probability that you will be appointed. Indeed several things have since happened that seems to convince the Burgesses that we must have an agent, and I dare say it would be done this Session could it be brought on again with propriety. The House of Burgesses this day Passed a bill for the removal (7) of the Seat of government to Richm'd Hill on my Lands adjoining the town of Richmond, and if it fails in Council wch I make not the least doubt but it will they talk of representing the matter home to his Majesty & using every means in their power to have it carried into Execution, should this be done must have at least a special agent for that purpose. We have likewise a probability of having a navigation made through the falls of Jas River by settling a toll & vesting the property in the adventurers & their heirs forever by act of assembly, and we have already £8,000 subscribed. If those two objects are carried into Execution it would be a great acquisition to my small Estate. Pray inform yourself in the best manner you can what probability of success might be expected in such an application regarding the seat of government. Mr. Lyons is & has been for sometime very unwell & has declined doing your business. I have employed a clever young man Mr Jno. Pendleton junior a nephew of Col. Edm'd Pendleton for one year [torn] has regulated the fee bill & have settled all fees of our officers at 12-6 &c on the gross Tobo. for two years so that you loose 1-10d on the hundred when the deduction was 30  $\frac{3}{4}$ c they gain 10 pc & when only 10  $\frac{3}{4}$ c they loose 2-6  $\frac{3}{4}$  ct. The bill sent up at first to the council fixed it at 10S. The Council made an amendment 13.4 wch was amended by the Burgesses 12-6 & signed to. Maj'r Osborne desires youll send him by the first opp'ty 1 doz. silver table spoons markt E. O. Inclosed Mr. Harris (Letter), I think he at present is in a good way Miss Strachans

(7)As Col. Adams anticipated, the act for removing the seat of government to Richmond was allowed to die in Council. It had passed the House by a vote of 48 to 32. The act for opening the upper James to navigation is in Hening VIII, 564-576.

apply themselves to work very close & have as much as they can do & have sold most of their goods to good advantage. I dont doubt but that they will do well. We are in Expectation of seeing Woodford, and by him shall send you all the money I can procure for your debts, & everything else that I can think of that will be acceptable. Your old friend Charles is now present & desires his Compliments. My family I thank God were all well a few days ago.

I shall remain Dr-Bror

Yrs mo. affectly

Rich'd Adams.

V

Wmsburg 15th May 1772

Dr Bror

Youll receive this ☞ Doct'r James Currie (8), one of our townsmen, who is esteemed there as an honest industrious man and a good phisician, and has Practiced for two or three years with great success & made money, he is proprietor of Baines Tenem't & land lord to our friend Mr. Coutts, who will also mention him to you, he goes over on business to make but short stay in England & then to return, he applyed to me to be made known to you as he has no acquaintance in London, any civilitys, or advice youll give him will be thankfully acknowledged. I had your letters ☞ Woodford & Gooseley, Woodford arrived the 25th last month. Your serv'ts we have sold to Mr. Sampson Matthews at £15.5 curr't money, £30 sterl'g in part to be remitted ☞ Woodford the Ball'ce to be paid next April. It revives my spirits to find you have some thoughts of returning this Summer, which will be most pleasing to me & all friends, and think upon the Plan you mentioned it will be most for the interest of connexions, as you can be of more real service here to Messrs Perkins, B. & Brown, Improve your own

---

(8)Dr. James Currie, a Scotchman, who before and after the Revolution was one of the leading physicians of Richmond.

Estate and be useful to your friends, I would therefore recommend it strongly to you to return as soon as possible, and as the public matter you hinted must remain in suspense 'til the assembly meets again your coming over will be also an advantage in that respect, and hope you'll be on your way before this gets to London, the Plan of business you mentioned of Messrs Barnes & Redgate would be acceptable to me as I don't care to be Idle, provided you approve of the men, & they will make it worth my while, and if you do not care to be concern'd & the business should be considerable enough I shall call in the assistance of our relation Mr. Smith, who is lately married to Miss Belfield, & hope will be very happy with her, his mother has been for some time in a low state of health, but hear she is something better. I shall see her soon, your next letters will I make no doubt inform me of your resolution in regard to the time of your returning when I shall write you more fully. Shall not therefore for the present add more than to thank you for all steps you have taken and that the blessing of Providence may protect & crown all your undertakings with success is the sincere prayer of your mo. affte Bror

Rich'd Adams.

I left my Dr wife & Family a few days ago very well. We have made some good Hams, wch we shall send you <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Woodford and anything else we can Procure that we think may be acceptable. Mr. Eppes & Mrs Fry also well, Sister Eppes will ship 3 or 4 hhds Tobo. in Woodford.

## VI

Richm'd Hill July 1st 1777

Dear Bro'r

Our assembly adjourned on Saturday last, on wch Day you was elected by a large majority of the House a Privy Councillor, They wish most heartily that you would come forth & take an active part in Public life, Indeed there seems a necessity that every man of ability should, at this critical time, I therefore wish if you can make it convenient that you would accept of your appointment, had the assembly known with certainty that

you would have gone to Congress I am very shore you would have been elected. I was apply'd to by many members, I told them you was fond of retirement & that I thought it would be most agreeable to you to stay at home, but if your Country called for your assistance I thought it the Duty of every man at this time to accept of any appointment his Country should call him to, unsolicited. It is really a melancholy reflection to find that we have not proper men of ability to fill the very Important offices of the State. Our affairs were a very flattering aspect to the North. General Washington now begins to have a formidable army & have confined the Enemy into very narrow ground & unless they get a reinforcement soon (wch it is said they cannot have) he must give them a Capital blow, its said the only reinforcements the Enemy can have soon are a few thousand Hessians to recruit their Cota of men sent last year, and we hear we have taken two Transports with ab't 300 of them with a Valuable Prise ship from London loaded with Dry Goods 10.000 Blankets &c. The Torys now in Howe's army begin to relent & its said 300 of them have lately come over to us. I hope in the Course of the Summer we shall give a good account of the Enemy & put an end to the Dispute.

I remain with my love to my Sister

Y'r Affte Bro'r

Rich'd Adams

VII

Virg'a Richm'd Hill 3d July 1778

Dr Bro'r

I rec'd your letter of the 23rd June wch confirmed the agreeable news of the Enemy having Evacuated Philadelphia, this great event I hope is a Prelude that they intend to leave us altogether & at last make a Virtue of Necessity by declaring us Independent, the Conduct of the Congress in regard to the Commissio'rs gives general Satisfaction, we are impatient to hear the fate of the Enemy on thier retreat through the Jerseys. I hope our Noble General will give a good acct of them, pray continue to send me the News Papers, they afford great Satisfaction to all friends here.



As to the Plan of Trade I mentioned to you, you certainly did not think I meant to be either a forestaller or Engrosser in order to make an advantage of the distresses of my Countrymen; you must know, I always have had the greatest abhorrence to such a practice, or I might have made my thousands as others have done, no I mean to form a Comp'y of a few Principal gent'n of the first Fortunes & characters, who will carry on Trade on a fair open Liberal Plan, as well for their own advantage, as for the benefit of the Country at large and to accomodate all foreigners that may come among us, may we not expect great numbers of such, who are ignorant of the language & Customs of the Country, & also may fall into such Hands as may deter them from Coming a second time, will it not therefore be convenient to them to find Houses Established by Gentm'n of Fortune, & who act from Principles of Honour, to commit the transactions of their affairs to, and where they are sure their property will be safe. While things remain in this unsettled state the first object I think would be to engage all the consignm'ts we possibly could from Foreigners, & to see that they are fairly dealt by, and the best dispatch given their ships, this would endear us to them, & fix them in our Trade & of course throw most of their business into such Capital Houses, as I would have established at the heads of all the Rivers. You desire to be informed of the state of the Tobo. trade. We have a large quantity at our Warehouses at present on Hand, for some months past it was difficult to fix any certain price, it altering every week 'til it got up to £4 & £4.5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>c. & every man a purchaser, since the Enemys ships have left the Bay things have remained at a stand & for some weeks past we have had but few purchasers, so that the People begin to offer their Tobo freely at £4 & I could at this time purchase a large quantity at that price, how times may alter, you have the best opp'ty of knowing. If you meet with any person wanting Tobo. I shall be glad to Execute an order for 500 hhds or any less Q'ty at a Commission of 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>ct, Provided I could have the money immediately. We have had very Seasonable weathe

& a good Prospect for Crops of every Sort, except Wheat, wch is much hurt with the rust.

I remain with my Compl'ts to Mr. Harvie & Col. Banister  
Yrs &c.

R'd Adams.

### VIII

(Copy)

[Addressed] Thomas Adams Esqr at Congress Philadelphia.

Richm'd Hill July 20, 1778.

Dr Bror

I most heartily congratulate you on the Joyful News of the arrival of the French fleet, I hope in God they are equal to the business they are come on, and that with assistance of our Noble General & his Brave army we may get a complete Victory, this will be so Capital a Strike, that it must determine the fate of England & sink them into ruin forever. I hear many prizes are already brought to Philadelphia & suppose it will be the market for the sale of the greatest part of the goods, nothing but the fear of the small Pox prevents me mustering up all the money I can raise & making you a visit, I wish the great Comp'y I have been entertaining you with would provide themselves for this grand event, wch I think there is a moral certainly must happen, and that your next letter will advise me of it. Pray write me by all opportunity, tell Mr. Harvie there is a large field before him to use his Genius as a merch't and that I am ready with all the money I can raise to strengthen his Hands, though most of the money I have been able to collect I have put into the Loan Office. The price of Tobo. continues here from £4 to £4.5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>ct. expect will soon be higher. Some has sold on York River at £4.10 wch I suppose will soon be the curr't price here, I remain

Yr Affte Bror

Rich'd Adams

P. S. All friends at present well, our worthy friend Mr. Air-eli (?) has made his exit.